

US 60 CORRIDOR DEFINITION STUDY
PINAL COUNTY CORRIDORS DEFINITION STUDY
WILLIAMS GATEWAY CORRIDOR DEFINITION STUDY

Contract T0449-0001
ADOT Purchase Order No. PGKG 2465

JOINT MEETING OF TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

June 21, 2005

**Arizona Department of Transportation
Human Resources Development Center
1130 N. 22nd Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona
Grand Canyon Room
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

ATTENDANCE

Andy Smith, *Arizona Department of
Transportation (US 60, Williams
Gateway Project Manager)*

Dianne Kresich, *Arizona Department of
Transportation (Pinal County Corridors
Project Manager)*

Sandie Smith, *Pinal County*

Ken Buchanan, *Pinal County*

Greg Stanley, *Pinal County*

Kathy Borquez, *Pinal County*

Doug Hansen, *Pinal County*

Bill Leister, *Central Arizona Association
of Governments*

Ron Grittman, *City of Apache Junction*

Mike Normand, *City of Chandler*

Don Freeman, *Pima Association of
Governments*

John Lynch, *Maricopa County
Department of Transportation*

Tim Oliver, *Maricopa County
Department of Transportation*

James Moline, *Gila River Indian
Community*

Luke Albert, *Kirkham Michael*

Patrick Pittenger, *City of Mesa*

Jermaine R. Hannon, *Federal Highway
Administration*

Mark Young, *Town of Queen Creek*

Roger Herzog, *Maricopa Association of
Governments*

Paul Waung, *DMJM Harris*

John McNamara, *DMJM Harris*

Ethan Rauch, *DMJM Harris*

Steve Jimenez, *Arizona Department of
Transportation*

Stuart Boggs, *Valley Metro/RPTA*

Luana Capponi, *Arizona State Land
Department*

Consultant Staff in Attendance

Dave Perkins, *Kimley-Horn and
Associates, Inc.*

Brent Crowther, *Kimley-Horn and
Associates, Inc.*

Pete Lima, *Lima & Associates*

Patrizia Gonella-Ramos, *Lima &
Associates*

Steve Decker, *Cambridge Systematics*

Hugh Louch, *Cambridge Systematics*

MEETING SUMMARY

A joint Technical Advisory Committee Meeting of the US 60 Corridor Definition Study, the Pinal County Corridors Definition Study, and the Williams Gateway Corridor Definition Study was held on June 21, 2005 at the Arizona Department of Transportation HRDC facility at 1130 N. 22nd Avenue in Phoenix.

The meeting began at 10:00 a.m. and adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Andy Smith opened the meeting. He thanked the TAC members for their attendance and participation, and asked all members to introduce themselves and to state the agency that they represent.

Andy Smith stated that he and Dianne Kresich would present all presentation materials to the TAC to provide a 'big picture' perspective, and then he and Dianne would provide an opportunity for TAC members to ask specific questions.

2. Study Progress

Andy Smith reviewed the status of each of the following corridor definition studies.

- Williams Gateway Study Area
- US 60 Study Area
- Pinal County Corridors Study Area

Andy stated that each study team had completed the first round of open houses, had submitted Working Paper No. 1 (Documentation of Existing Conditions), and had performed a preliminary needs analysis for each of the corridors. Andy stated that his presentation will focus on the results of the needs analysis. During the next several weeks the consultant teams will perform feasibility analysis for each of the corridor segments that were justified in the needs analysis. The feasibility analysis will include engineering feasibility, financial feasibility, environmental feasibility, and community constraints and preferences.

Andy Smith reviewed the purpose of the Corridor Definition Studies. The studies will provide recommendations on the need for each corridor, and for those corridors that exhibit need, whether they are feasible given existing physical, environmental, financial, and community constraints. Each study will also recommend if a corridor should be a state highway. Andy clarified that the Corridor Definition Studies will not recommend a road for which a need is not established, recommend a road that is not feasible to build, determine an exact alignment for the road, or design any aspect of the road.

3. Travel Demand Modeling

Andy stated that a travel demand model was developed for use by each of the three study teams. The travel demand model utilized information from MAG, Pinal County, and local jurisdictions.

Population projections in the travel demand model for Pinal County were based on the 2004 Central Arizona College Bond Feasibility Study. Population projections for the Apache Junction area are based on the Apache Junction Small Area Transportation

Study, and population projections within the Maricopa County area are based on projections provided by the Maricopa Association of Governments.

Dianne Kresich presented a comparison of population projections from four different sources: the Bond Feasibility Study, the Southeast Maricopa/Northern Pinal Transportation Study, the Pinal County model, and the Arizona Department of Economic Security. The comparison shows that the Bond Feasibility Study contains the most aggressive population projections (approximately 1.1 million people in the study area), while projections from the Department of Economic Security are the most conservative (approximately 200,000 in study area). The comparison also showed annual growth rates. To achieve a population of approximately 1.1 million people in 2030, Pinal County would have to grow at an average annual rate of approximately 6.2 percent. This exceeds the 30-year historic average annual growth rate for both Maricopa County (3.9 percent) and for the Las Vegas metropolitan area (5.6 percent). This equates to a population increase of approximately 30,000 people every year in Pinal County.

Dianne stated that following four travel demand modeling scenarios were analyzed.

- *2030 Base Future model (no corridors, 4-lane arterials)* – This model includes roadway improvements that are included in the MAG Regional Transportation Plan, planned and programmed improvements in Pinal County, and basic improvements in Pinal County that will be required to support future development. This model assumes that the local arterial network in Pinal County is built to 4-lanes, and that the state highway system will not be expanded. No new corridors are included in this model.
- *2030 Enhanced Future (no corridors, 6-lane arterials, 4-lane state highway system)* – This model is an enhancement to the 2030 Base Future model in that local arterials are assumed to be expanded from 4- lanes to 6-lanes. No new corridors are included in this model.
- *Corridor Concept (study corridors, 4-lane arterials)* – This model is an enhancement to the 2030 Future Base model in that it contains preliminary corridor concepts. This model assumes that the local arterial system is expanded to 4-lanes, while the existing state highway system remains at 2-lanes.
- *Corridor Concept Plus (study corridors, 4-lane arterial, 4-lane state highway system)* – This model is an enhancement to the Corridor Concept model in that the state highway system is expanded from 2-lanes to 4-lanes.

4. Corridor Needs Analysis

Dianne Kresich summarized the results of the travel demand model analysis:

- Corridor segments for which the projected demand does not justify the need for additional capacity include:
 - East Valley corridor, west of Val Vista Road
 - East Valley corridor, east of the Apache Junction/Coolidge corridor
 - Williams Gateway east of the Apache Junction/Coolidge corridor
 - US 60 corridor, south of the Williams Gateway corridor
 - Apache Junction/Coolidge corridor south of SR-287
- Corridor segments for which the demand does not justify a freeway include:
 - Apache Junction/Coolidge corridor north of the Williams Gateway corridor

Dianne pointed out that there is a need for additional roadway capacity in the Queen Creek area, but that a freeway corridor in this area would not provide regional connectivity. While additional roadway capacity is needed, a freeway corridor along the Riggs Road or Hunt Highway alignment would not solve the congestion issues in Queen Creek.

Dianne presented the preliminary needs recommendations, based on the results of the travel demand model analysis. Preliminary recommendations are:

- Additional analysis (feasibility) for the following corridor segments:
 - US 60 corridor, east of Mountain View exit to milepost 205.
 - Williams Gateway corridor from the Pinal County line to the Apache Junction/Coolidge corridor.
 - Apache Junction/Coolidge corridor south of Williams Gateway to the Florence/Coolidge area (to either SR 287 or SR 79).
- Right-of-way preservation for the following corridors segments:
 - US 60 from milepost 205 south to Florence Junction.
 - SR 79 from Florence Junction to SR 287.
 - All of SR 287, and SR 387.
 - SR 587 from I-10 to SR 287.
 - SR 87 from I-10 to SR 287.
- Corridor preservation (by county and local jurisdictions) for segments of the Apache Junction/Coolidge corridor from SR 287 extending southwest to SR 87, and for an east/west terminus to the Apache Junction/Coolidge corridor that extends from I-10 eastward to SR 87.
- Development of a parkway facility (by local jurisdictions) for the Idaho Road alignment from the Williams Gateway-Apache Junction/Coolidge corridor north to US 60.
- Further development of arterial system (by local jurisdictions) throughout the study areas, particularly for Queen Creek
- Dianne stated that ADOT will commit to funding Small Area Transportation Studies in the Queen Creek, Florence, Coolidge, and Eloy areas, if the corridor concepts are approved by the State Transportation Board. The Small Area Transportation Studies will provide direction and guidance to local jurisdictions for access management, corridor preservation, right-of-way, and capacity enhancements. Dianne also stated that the upcoming Regional Transportation Profile Study for I-10 and other state highways in the Pinal County area will address many of the transportation needs within northern Pinal County. In addition, the upcoming Statewide Access Management Plan will provide support for corridor access preservation.

5. Preliminary Corridor Concept

Dianne Kresich and Andy Smith summarized some of the key findings and lessons learned from the travel demand analysis, and the corridor concepts that will continue to be developed throughout the remainder of the studies:

- US 60:
 - Lack of local arterial network in Gold Canyon area has resulted in unacceptable levels of congestion on US 60.
 - Future travel demands justify a parallel facility to US 60.
 - Access management is vital for US 60 southeast of the parallel facility to US 60.
- East-West/Hunt Highway:
 - No need has been identified based on an assessment of 2030 travel demands for a corridor east of the Town of Queen Creek, and a corridor within or west of the Town of Queen Creek would not solve the transportation issues in that area.
 - Absence of a mature arterial network in Chandler, Gilbert, and Queen Creek creates congestion that is not resolved by the East Valley corridor.
- Williams Gateway and North-South:
 - Major travel movement is between northeast Pinal and southeast Maricopa Counties.
 - No need has been identified based on an assessment of 2030 travel demands for a north-south state corridor south of SR 287 and north of MAG Williams Gateway.
 - No need has been identified based on an assessment of 2030 travel demands for extension of MAG Williams Gateway east into Pinal County.
 - Arterial network issues are not resolved, but are significantly improved by a combined corridor – Williams Gateway ending at a junction with a North-South facility.
- System Level Strategies:
 - Preservation of right-of-way by local jurisdictions recommended for future (post 2030) corridors.
 - Widening and access management on all state highways is critical as Pinal County grows.
 - Toll facilities will be considered; local support expressed.
 - New corridors cannot function without arterial development.
 - Coordination between ADOT and locals should continue.

6. Next Steps

Dianne reminded the TAC of some of upcoming project activities:

- Comments on Working Paper No. 1 are due today. Please submit them to Dianne.
- Dianne will make a presentation to the Chandler Transportation Commission on July 21. Stakeholders are requested to let their respective jurisdictions know of the presentation. The public is invited.
- Dave Perkins and Brent Crowther will be contacting each member of the Pinal County Corridors TAC to arrange a working group meeting to receive input regarding the corridor concepts.
- The study teams will proceed with development of Working Paper No. 2. Working Paper No. 2 will address the feasibility of the corridors.

7. Question and Answer Session

The opportunity was given to members of the Technical Advisory Committees to ask questions regarding any aspect of the study. Comments and questions were as follows:

- Stuart Boggs suggested that the southeast to northwest travel patterns follow the existing Union Pacific rail line. The geographic and capacity constraints of the corridor, coupled with the existing rail line, provide an opportunity for transit.
- Tim Oliver stated that the results of the travel demand analysis are consistent with what Maricopa County has seen in previous studies and modeling efforts. He stated that the County is very comfortable with the preliminary analysis results and recommendations.
- In response to a question regarding the travel demand model, Hugh Louch explained that Cambridge Systematics and Lima & Associates developed the travel demand model for use by all three corridor definition studies.
- Patrick Pittenger asked if additional analysis of toll roads will be included in the financial feasibility analysis. Dianne Kresich stated that additional analysis of the financial feasibility of the corridors will be conducted.
- Sandie Smith stated that developers continue to gain access onto US 60. She stated that Pinal County is planning to improve facilities such as Ironwood Road. She then asked for clarification of the recommendations for the Williams Gateway corridor. Andy Smith clarified that the analysis has determined that there is not a need to extend the Williams Gateway corridor eastward to the US 60, but that the area is better served by a connection to the Apache Junction/Coolidge corridor which will then extend south to SR 79 or SR 287. Dave Perkins further clarified that regardless of the selected MAG Williams Gateway corridor alignment, the need has been identified to extend the Williams Gateway corridor eastward into Pinal County to connect with the Apache Junction/Coolidge corridor. He further clarified that there is not a strong demand for a freeway-level corridor north of the Williams Gateway corridor. Hugh Louch stated that the “corridor concept plus”, where state facilities are expanded to 4 lanes, is still under consideration.
- Sandie Smith stated that Pinal County is planning to expand Felix Road to 5 or 7 lanes.
- Mike Normand asked if the Apache Junction/Coolidge corridor will connect to the Loop 202. It was clarified that the Apache Junction/Coolidge corridor will connect to the Loop 202 via the Williams Gateway corridor.
- Ron Grittmann asked how, by not extending the US 60 bypass/reroute, will ADOT preserve access in the future with the continual and anticipated development pressures? Pete Lima stated that US 60 southeast of the reroute section will be recommended as an access controlled facility. It is essential that developers, the city, and county begin planning for this now.
- Sandie Smith stated that when State Trust Land is sold, the purchaser needs to be told that the roadway will be access controlled.
- Mike Normand asked for clarification as to which population projections were used in the travel demand model. Dianne clarified that the Pinal County projections from the Bond Feasibility Study were used.

- Sandie Smith stated that during the SRP 500 KV line siting process, it was identified that 250,000 people would live in the Florence area. She believes that the Bond Feasibility Study is conservative.
- Alton Bruce recognized that the TAC agreed that the Bond Feasibility Study was the best source of information available, though he also agreed that that it was still conservative. He stated that as currently planned, the City of Coolidge will exceed the population forecast in the Bond Feasibility Study.
- Hugh Louch stated that they recognize that local plans will continue to change. The opportunity to update population projections will be provided in the upcoming Small Area Transportation Studies and the Regional Transportation Profile Study. He stated that the consulting team used the best available information at the time.
- Ron Grittmann stated that when State Trust Land is sold, it will be a 'tsunami' effect in terms of the resulting development and generated traffic. He stated that population growth will exceed the 6.2 percent annual average forecast in the Bond Feasibility Study. Dianne Kresich stated that the 6.2 percent is a long-term, historical number that can be supported through a review of the last 30 years of development. Tim Oliver stated that communities often grow at a very high rate at the beginning because the starting point in terms of their population is low. He stated that as communities grow, the compounded growth rate tends to flatten because the base population is increasing. Over the long-term, 6.2 percent is a very aggressive growth rate. It may not seem aggressive today because we are starting out from a very small base.
- Alton Bruce stated that subdivisions that are currently being entitled are not being entitled as 6-lane facilities.
- Pete Lima stated that any new developments should seriously consider the 6-lane arterial system. For example, the 4-lane arterial system in the City of Maricopa will not be able to handle the anticipated traffic. It is important that local jurisdictions require right-of-way, on the section lines, to support a 6-lane arterial network.
- Ron Grittmann stated that the Small Area Transportation Studies will be critical in assisting the local agencies to determine how much right-of-way should be preserved.
- Mike Normand asked if the maps would be available on the project website. Dianne stated that she would make the presentation available to TAC members.
- Roger Herzog asked if the recommendations presented today are the recommendations that will be presented to the State Transportation Board. Andy stated that these are the recommendations that will be carried forward for further feasibility analysis. Final recommendations will be made after the feasibility analysis. Dave Perkins stated that the feasibility analysis will refine corridor opportunities and constraints within the respective study areas.
- Don Freeman asked for clarification of the corridor characteristics. Dave Perkins stated that they were modeled as a 6-lane freeway/access controlled facility. Don asked for a description of the characteristics that would qualify the corridor as a state highway. Don stated that he has asked this question before but has been unable to receive an answer. Dianne Kresich stated that there are not hard and quantifiable criteria. Dave Perkins stated that presently all freeway facilities are state highways.

Pete Lima stated that a major criterion is connectivity to the state highway system. Hugh Louch also stated that they will be developing criteria that will include accessibility, mobility, congestion relief, emission impacts, and safety.

- Sandie Smith stated that Pinal County is prepared to assume responsibility for the existing portion of US 60 in the Gold Canyon area.
- Greg Stanley asked for a general description of the scope of the profile study and for the access management plan. Dianne Kresich stated that she would be able to provide scopes for each of these projects.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.